



HOPKINS CENTER

presents

Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra
Anthony Princiotti *conductor*

with special guest
Bonnie Thron *cello*

This performance is made possible in part by generous support from the William D. 1905 and Besse M. Blatner Fund No. 1, the Lane 1928 and Elizabeth C. Dwinell Fund No. 2, the Admiral Gene W. Markey 1918 Memorial Fund, the Roesch Family Fund in Support of Instrumental Ensembles, the Arthur R. Virgin 1900 Fund No. 1 for the Advancement of Music and the Friends of the Symphony Orchestra.

Saturday, November 21, 2009 • 8 pm
Spaulding Auditorium • Dartmouth College

PROGRAM

Waltz from the *Serenade for Strings*, Op. 48

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Cello Concerto No. 1 in E-Flat Major, Op. 107

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Allegretto

Moderato

Cadenza

Allegro con moto

Bonnie Thron, *cello*

• INTERMISSION •

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Allegro con brio

Andante con moto

Scherzo: Allegro

Allegro

PROGRAM NOTES

**Waltz from the *Serenade for Strings*
in C Major, Op. 48**

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

“You can imagine, my dear friend, that recently my Muse has been benevolent, when I tell you that I have written two long works very rapidly: a Festival Overture [The Year 1812] and a Serenade in four movements for String Orchestra. The overture will be very loud and noisy, but I wrote it with no warm feeling of love, and therefore there will probably be no artistic merit in it. I composed the serenade from inner conviction. It is a heartfelt piece and so, I dare to think, is not lacking in real qualities.”

*Tchaikovsky, in a letter to his patroness,
Nadezhda von Meck*

Tchaikovsky’s passion for the music and aesthetic manners of the great European masters set him apart from his more nationalistically-inclined musical compatriots. Within his personal pantheon of musical gods, it was Mozart who stood above all others, and Tchaikovsky’s String *Serenade* affectionately evokes Mozart’s style, albeit through the prism of late 19th-century Romanticism. The forms and phrases are clear and symmetrical. Simple melody with accompaniment is the primary expressive vehicle, balanced by passages in contrapuntal style, the textures alternating between Classic lucidity and Romantic lushness.

Over the course of his career, Tchaikovsky’s affinity for the European waltz evolved into a signature

PROGRAM NOTES CONTINUED

aspect of his style, and the *Waltz* from the *String Serenade* has become as well known as any of his compositions in the genre. Its prevailing affect is gentle and insouciant; within the context of the *Serenade* as a whole, it serves to provide a sense of atmospheric contrast with the more opulent, full-throated modes of expression that characterize the work's other movements. Its reputation as an engaging, stand-alone concert piece dates from the serenade's premiere in October of 1881, when a rapturous audience at the Great Hall of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory demanded the waltz's repetition.

Cello Concerto No. 1 in E-Flat, Op. 107 **Dmitri Shostakovich**

Westerners have long found it difficult to consider the music of Dmitri Shostakovich through a lens that is not altered by the ideological controversies of the Cold War and the composer's dramatic personal story. For anyone who chooses to write about Shostakovich, a sense of treading on ground that has already been traversed countless times is difficult to escape. One might hope that as memories of the Soviet era recede into the past, Shostakovich's music can be viewed in more purely objective terms. And yet it is undeniable that the political and social environment in which he lived profoundly affected his art. While we can safely assume that Shostakovich would have written compelling music even if he had lived in a state characterized by relative openness and political freedom, the intersection between his intrinsically anxiety-ridden, non-heroic personality and a totalitarian dictatorship (particularly one that was horrifyingly creative and successful in controlling a society of millions) produced music that is utterly distinctive. It is hard to escape the fact that the circumstances of Shostakovich's life are embedded in his work, and any rational assessment of his music (particularly his most important works) has to proceed with a significant awareness of these extra-musical elements.

Shostakovich's *Cello Concerto No. 1* is inextricably linked to his personal and artistic relationship with the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. Rostropovich began his professional training in 1943 at the age of sixteen, when he entered the Moscow Conservatory as a student in cello and composition. As a member of Shostakovich's class in orchestration, he quickly formed a close bond with the composer. In addition to being captivated by the young cellist's musical abilities, Shostakovich felt impelled to guide Rostropovich in his professional and personal development. Both musicians had suffered the loss of their fathers at the age of sixteen and were given the difficult task of supporting their families while still students. In Shostakovich's case, it was the director of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, the great composer Alexander Glazunov, who became a surrogate father to the grieving youth; it was a role Shostakovich would reflexively adopt with Rostropovich two decades later.

It wasn't long before Rostropovich became a major figure in Soviet music and an intimate of the nation's leading musicians. By the end of the 1940s, composers were fighting with each other to write works for him to premiere. Yet in spite of his closeness to Shostakovich, it was a long time before Rostropovich was able to elicit a new work from the pen of his mentor:

The First Cello Concerto was the first work that Shostakovich wrote specially for me. Interestingly enough, I never asked him to write anything. Once, when talking with Nina Vasilyevna, Dmitri Dmitriyevich's late wife, I raised the question of a commission: "Nina Vasilyevna, what should I do to make Dmitri Dmitriyevich write me a cello concerto?" She answered, "Slava, if you want Dmitri Dmitriyevich to write something for you, the only recipe I can give you is this—never ask him, or talk to him about it." So, with the greatest difficulty I managed to restrain myself. But although I never spoke about it, Dmitri Dmitriyevich knew that I constantly dreamt of his writing a piece for me.

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It wasn't until the summer of 1959 that Rostropovich got his wish, although it appears that the idea of writing a cello concerto had been gestating within Shostakovich for the better part of a decade. It is clear that Prokofiev's *Sinfonia Concertante for Cello and Orchestra*, premiered in 1952 and dedicated to Rostropovich, served as a point of inspiration for Shostakovich's *Concerto*. Shostakovich was a frequent attendee at performances of Prokofiev's *Sinfonia*, and he confessed to Rostropovich that he played his recording of it so often that eventually the disc produced nothing but a vague hissing sound. In particular, Shostakovich found child-like pleasure in the *Sinfonia's* timpani part, which in the work's closing bars brings the comically frenzied musical proceedings to a final halt with a series of individual fortissimo strokes.

Other connections between the two works are subtler. In the second part of Prokofiev's work, he quotes Shostakovich's musical monogram of DSCH (the notes D, E-flat, C and B natural; in German musical nomenclature, an E-flat is called Es, while a B-natural is referred to as H to distinguish it from a B-flat). The primary theme of the Shostakovich concerto's first movement employs this motto's characteristic rhythm of short-short-short-long, while the monogram's pitches form the basis for the movement's second theme. It is noteworthy that this autobiographical musical talisman most often appears in Shostakovich works whose character is fundamentally profound; its appearance inevitably brings to mind the repression under which Shostakovich, Prokofiev and many Soviet artists labored. In this regard, the two composers shared an unhappy fate during the final years of Stalinism. Both were officially denounced by the Central Committee of the Communist Party as "artistically suspect" in the infamous "Zhdanov Decree" of 1948 (so-named after the Commissar of Soviet Cultural Affairs). This sort of official condemnation as an "enemy of the state" carried serious implications; people who were designated as such often lost their livelihoods, their physical freedom and, in some

instances, their lives. Prokofiev was broken by experience; his *Sinfonia Concertante* was the last significant work he would write, and when he died on March 5th, 1953 (ironically enough, on the same day as Stalin), he was utterly destitute. Although Stalin's death and the reversal of the Zhdanov decree in 1958 lessened the sense of threat under which Shostakovich lived, by the time he wrote his first *Cello Concerto*, his characteristic skepticism had ripened into a dark cynicism. This is readily apparent in the atmosphere of the *Concerto*. The march-like gestures of the first movement are set against knotty, dissonant harmonies and scored for grimly shrieking winds. The second movement is deeply mournful and elegiac, while the following 148-bar cadenza, which forms a movement in itself, may be seen as a portrait of Shostakovich's profound sense of isolation. The *Finale* is a surreptitious assault on Stalin himself, as Shostakovich fashions the movement's principal theme from Stalin's favorite song, a banal Georgian folk tune with maudlin lyrics called *Suliko*. Stalin's affection for this song inspired within Shostakovich a near-hysterical sort of vicious amusement; the notion that a man responsible for the liquidation of millions would wax lachrymose at the thought of a mythical lost sweetheart struck the composer as the ultimate crystallization of human hypocrisy. Nonetheless, after 1948, Shostakovich never failed to be keenly aware of the lines he couldn't cross if he wanted to steer clear of the government's oppressive hand; the melodic references to Stalin's beloved *Suliko* in the *Concerto* are camouflaged so skillfully that the composer had to point them out to Rostropovich.

Symphony #5 in C minor, Op. 67 Ludwig van Beethoven

To say the least, the first decade of the 19th century was a fruitful time for Beethoven. A partial list of the composer's accomplishments during this period includes the six Opus 18 and three Opus 59 *String Quartets*, the *Violin Concerto*, the *Third*, *Fourth* and *Fifth Piano Concerti*, the first two versions of *Fidelio*, the *Mass in C* and the *Appassionata Sonata*.

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Beethoven's *First Symphony* received its premiere in April of 1800; by the spring of 1808 he had completed his *Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth* and *Sixth Symphonies*. The first sketches for the *Fifth Symphony* appear in a sketchbook Beethoven used in 1804-1805. An examination of the sketchbooks from the spring of 1804 through the spring of 1808 reveals that Beethoven worked on a number of pieces simultaneously. Thus, the composition of the *Fifth Symphony* was interrupted for the completion of the *Fourth*.

Beethoven's sketchbooks provide an important illustration of his approach to composition. The Romantic Movement placed a high value on inspiration. The daring, innovative aspects of Beethoven's music lead us to feel the dominance of this ethos, yet a look at the sketchbooks gives a different perspective. Although his mind was filled with ideas, he was constantly reworking them. Beethoven continuously kneaded, chipped at and reshaped his ideas in a search for what he considered the one right expression. Some of the material in the sketchbooks finds its way into his compositions only after an interval of many years. Beethoven once told a friend that his memory was so good that he felt he was always carrying his ideas with him.

Besides offering a fascinating look at the creative process of a genius, these sketchbooks also contain invaluable information for the performer. One early sketch of the first movement of the *Fifth Symphony* bears the inscription *Sinfonia Allegro primo*; underneath this inscription is the indication *Presto*. This provides an important clue to Beethoven's tempo-conception for the movement, which has been a source of controversy since Beethoven's time. The attribution to Beethoven of the remark, "Thus Fate knocks on the door," by his friend and biographer Anton Schindler in describing the principal motive of the movement inevitably led to interpretations that were significantly slower than Beethoven's eventual tempo indication of *Allegro con brio*. This is

in spite of the fact that Beethoven's own metronome marking for the first movement (108 = half-note; it was added almost ten years after the premiere of the symphony) indicates a pace that is right in line with the idea of an *Allegro presto* or an *Allegro con brio*. This information implies that Beethoven conceived of the first movement as being relentlessly intense and indeed quite fast.

Sketches for the second movement reveal interesting tempo and rhythmic characteristics as well. An early sketch shows both of the movement's principal themes in an embryonic form. The first theme is given the tempo marking *Andante quasi Menuetto*, while the second has the indication *quasi Trio* written above. The idea of a *Menuetto* would eventually give way to a set of variations on the two themes, but this sketch gives us a significant piece of information about the rhythmic style of the movement. It leads to the idea that the contrast Beethoven sought to create between this movement and the first can be as easily found in a light, dance-like approach as in a sustained, lyrical interpretation. Additionally, Beethoven's metronome marking for the movement (a flowing pace of 92 = eighth note) seems to confirm this idea.

Beethoven originally conceived of the *Scherzo* as a closed movement, without any sort of bridge to the *Finale*. He also considered using the same "double scherzo" form he employed in his *Fourth Symphony* (he would use this form in the *Sixth* and *Seventh Symphonies* as well). He eventually gravitated to the idea of connecting the third and fourth movements. A significant number of sketches are devoted to this long transition, and it is clear that it cost Beethoven a great deal of effort. Three of the sketches focus on the development of the Timpani part in this bridge, as Beethoven sought to make an organic connection between the triple rhythm of the *Scherzo* and the duple of the *Finale*. The idea of placing this rhythm above an A-Flat pedal-point was recycled from an early sketch in which Beethoven was

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considering options for a transition from the *Scherzo* to the *Trio*.

Beethoven's earliest conception of the Finale was not that of a triumphant *Allegro* in C Major. One of the early sketches for the symphony contains a beginning with the inscription "l'ultimo pezzo" (the last piece), written in C minor and six-eight time. There are no indications that Beethoven tried to develop this fragment. It is likely that the idea of an appassionata finale in the tonic minor was abandoned as the symphony's middle movements began to take shape. Beethoven may have felt that such a movement would provide insufficient contrast to the C minor mysterious *Scherzo* it would follow. With the exception of the *Ninth Symphony*, the *Fifth* is the only symphony of Beethoven's in which he chose a minor tonality for the first movement. A brief survey of his chamber and orchestral music reveals that more often than not he ends his ensemble works in

the major mode, even when the opening movement of a work has been written in the minor. Beethoven eventually followed this pattern in the *Fifth Symphony's Finale*.

The *Fifth Symphony* received its premiere at a benefit performance for Beethoven on December 22, 1808, at the Theater-an-der-Wien. The program was devoted entirely to new music by Beethoven, and included the premieres of the *Fifth* and *Sixth Symphonies*, the Aria *Ah, Perfido!*, and the *Fantasia for Piano, Orchestra and Chorus, Opus 80* (which would later serve as a model for the finale of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*). The *Fifth Symphony* was published in April of 1809, and bears an unusual double dedication to two of Beethoven's patrons, the Prince Franz Joseph Lobkowitz and the Count Andreas Kyrillovitsch Razumovsky.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Bonnie Thron *cello* joined the North Carolina Symphony as principal cellist in 2000. Previously, she was a member of the Peabody Trio, in residence at the Peabody Institute, during which time the group won The Walter W. Naumburg Foundation's Chamber Music Competition.

Early in her career, Ms. Thron was assistant principal cellist of the Denver Symphony for one season. She has played and recorded with the Orpheus Chamber Ensemble, has spent summers playing the Sebago Long Lake Music Festival in Harrison, Maine, and also has had a long history with the Apple Hill Chamber Players as a guest artist, a chamber music coach and a member during the group's first Playing for Peace tour to the Middle East in 1991. Ms. Thron has performed concertos with the North Carolina Symphony, the Orpheus Chamber

Ensemble, the Juilliard Orchestra, the Panama National Orchestra, the Vermont Symphony Orchestra and various other orchestras in North Carolina and her home state of New Hampshire.

Ms. Thron has received both a bachelor's and a master's degree from The Juilliard School. Her teachers there included Lynn Harrell, Harvey Shapiro, Norman Fischer and Elsa Hilger. Ms. Thron has also received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Johns Hopkins University's School of Nursing. She worked for several years as a nurse at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and as a case manager in home care nursing during which time she was a cello teacher at the Baltimore School for the Arts.

Ms. Thron and her husband, clarinetist Fred Jacobowitz, have a 12 year old son, Louie.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS CONTINUED

Anthony Princiotti *conductor* is in his fifteenth year as conductor of the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Princiotti received his Doctor of Music degree from the Yale School of Music and a Bachelor of Music from The Juilliard School. He was the recipient of a conducting fellowship at Tanglewood, where he studied with Leonard Bernstein, Gustav Meier and Seiji Ozawa. Mr. Princiotti has been a recipient of the Marshall Bartholomew Scholarship, the Charles Ives Scholarship and the Yale School of Music Alumni Association Prize.

Between 1981 and 1987, Mr. Princiotti was first violinist with the Apple Hill Chamber Players

and appeared as a guest conductor with the Calgary Philharmonic, the Vermont Symphony, the New England String Ensemble, the Hartford Symphony, the San Paolo State Symphony, the Yale Philharmonic, the Norfolk Festival Orchestra, the Pioneer Valley Symphony and the Young Artists Philharmonic. In addition to his work with the Dartmouth Symphony, Mr. Princiotti is the Music Director of the New Hampshire Philharmonic Orchestra and the Associate Conductor of the Vermont Symphony. His recording of Telemann's *Twelve Fantasias for Unaccompanied Violin* was recently released.

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Special thanks to Marcia Cassidy, Michael Dabroski, Damla Er, Matthew M. Marsit & Elizabeth Shribman

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Tuesday, December 1 • 7 pm • Spaulding Auditorium

Robert Duff, conductor • with Erma Mellinger, mezzo soprano
Matthew M. Marsit, clarinetist & Dartmouth Wind Symphony conductor

This celebratory concert includes holiday music for brass, organ and choir, including Daniel Pinkham's most famous choral work, with traditional Nativity texts: *Christmas Cantata*; Steven Sametz's *Music's, Music*; and the world premiere of a Handel Society-commissioned piece by New York composer Daniel Brewbaker. Round out the evening with a preview of choral music the ensemble will perform during its upcoming tour to Europe.



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